

## **COMMAND AT SEA**

### **THE PRESTIGE, PRIVILEGE AND BURDEN OF COMMAND**

*By Joseph Conrad*

Only a seaman realizes to what extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman, this is not understandable, and sometimes it is difficult for us to comprehend - but it is so.

A ship at sea is a distant world in herself and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units, the Navy must place a great power, responsibility, and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command.

In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency of peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who, alone, is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfire and morale of his ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship.

This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless, command is the spur which has given the Navy its great leaders.

It is a duty which most richly deserves the highest time-honored title of the seafaring world...

**"CAPTAIN"**

